

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



H321.9  
H51  
Cop. 2

NEW DIRECTIONS IN HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK IN THE SIXTIES\*

I have looked forward to meeting with you and am happy to have an opportunity to see this 4-H Club Center. Georgia is to be congratulated for the vision and leadership that has made such facilities available.

The topic I have been given is a very popular one this year. Perhaps it is because this is the Centennial year for the land-grant colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture--our parent organizations--or maybe only because change is in the air. Whatever the reason, you are in good company. I'll warrant every college president, director of Extension, and State home demonstration agent has spoken on this subject at least once in 1962.

When we discuss "new directions" we must assume that some change in the present direction is considered advisable. It is good, I think, to look back occasionally, not only to see how far we have come, but also to check on our directions for the future. To illustrate this point, I should like to share with you a portion of a talk given by Miss Jessie Harris, former Dean of Home Economics at the University of Tennessee.

"The large American family, when land-grant colleges started, usually lived in the country and together the family produced at home much of the needed goods and services. These families were stable. They had roots in the community and the same house or farm served a family for several generations. In winter the kitchen was the family room in those 'good old days.' What a change today! Today's family is the best educated, most experienced, most adaptable, most married, most mobile, and the most insecure, nervous, and least stable in our history. The old values in family life have changed. Thrift is outmoded. Families rate themselves not by bank accounts, but by charge accounts. Our emphasis has shifted from helping families to produce goods and services to helping families manage all their resources for the development of each member of the family into a useful citizen in the community, the nation, and the world.

"Couples marry young, have their last child when the mother is about 26 years of age, and at 32 years of age she, too, follows the rest of the family out into the community and into the world's work--if she hasn't been out working all of the time between babies.

"In a program geared to today's family life we need to design the program of education in several stages very much like the space rocket

---

\*Talk by Eunice Heywood, Director, Division of Home Economics Programs, Federal Extension Service, USDA, at the National Negro Home Demonstration Agents' Meeting, 4-H Center, Dublin, Ga., October 8, 1962.

which is designed so that when one stage is completed a 'booster shot' is given for each next stage of its journey into orbit. Do we need a four stage family life program of education?

"Stage one, when young people are growing up and preparing for an advantageous entrance into adult life, forming a life partnership enroute; a second stage when they have their families; the third stage when the homemaker joins her family in the community, either as an income producer, or as a volunteer worker, or both; and a fourth stage of retirement on an income, with perhaps years of health ahead, and a desire to engage in useful and creative activity."

One of the greatest challenges facing Extension workers today is that of program development. It is considered good educational procedure to start where people are. It is not good to stop there. What do the families of your counties need and want? What do they expect to get from the Extension Service. In preparing for this visit with you, I read a number of studies that have been made recently. Some were of Negro families, some white, some a cross section of all families in a county or groups of counties. Most of them were made in the South but a few were from the North and West. I was impressed with the similarity of family-living problems identified by these studies. By this I do not mean that all families had the same problems but rather in each area some families had the same problems as some families in other areas. For instance, here is a list of problems taken from the report of one of your supervisors. 1/

"Shifting of rural population to urban areas and problems of family adjustment.

"The problems of financial security and higher level of living on the farm.

"Increased number of family units due to marriage at an early age.

"The lack of home economics information and effective homemaking skills in consumer education, child care and development, sex education, housing, family relationships and management.

"Increased life expectancy, misunderstanding among family members due to differences in age levels, attitudes, and experiences.

"Poor mental and physical health, poor nutrition and inadequate opportunities for recreational activities, financial insecurity, and unwise use of increased leisure time."

That list might be found in almost every county in the United States.

---

1/ 1961 Narrative Report of Negro Home Demonstration Work, by Marguerite P. Williams, Home Demonstration Agent, Arkansas.

As leaders in your counties, your eyes and ears must be ever alert to social and economic trends and to the most hurting problems of families. It is a mistake to consider all of today's homemakers as having the same interests, needs, or desires. Those we work with today are not all on farms and fewer will be in the future. They vary as to age, education, employment, amount and source of income, size of family, skills and ability, and in countless other ways. I hope you will have Mrs. Minnie Brown, Assistant State Home Economics Agent of North Carolina, tell you sometime of what she learned in her study of the North Carolina Negro homemakers. Among other things, she learned why some women did not wish to belong to home demonstration clubs. Her study also tells us what kind of women do belong to clubs and why. But the interesting fact to me is that the concerns of both members and nonmembers were about the same: problems of finances, how to get enough money or how to spend it wisely; how to bring up children properly and keep family relations in good order; and problems of nutrition and health.

From Mrs. Brown's study and those made in Mississippi of low-income families, both Negro and white, we know that home demonstration clubs are only a partial answer to ways of helping families.

Years ago most of the home demonstration agent's time was devoted to teaching home economics subject matter to women in organized groups. Today our records, the ones you send us, show that only about 15 percent of the women who benefit from Extension teaching are club members. Agents once worked almost entirely with families on farms and in small villages. Today 40 percent of the families we work with are from farms, 43 percent are urban, and the rest are rural nonfarm. I suspect that in the future we may need to increase our efforts to reach more of the latter group. Today agents use a wide variety of methods including workshops, forums, seminars, home visits, and courses taught by radio and TV, to reach a constantly expanding audience. In the future I believe we will tailor more of our programs to the specific needs of special groups of homemakers as some of you are now doing in your work on teenage nutrition, on farm and home development with older citizens, with young homemakers, etc.

I have been especially interested in the fine work some of you are doing with farm and home development families. Studies of young farm operator families prove that there are several important ways home agents can help them to raise their levels of living. You can show them how to grow more of their own food and to choose wisely what must be bought; to use credit wisely, not as a substitute for income but when advisable, as an aid to increasing income.

In the future we shall probably have more part-time farmers--those who have full-time jobs but live on a piece of land and utilize family labor to grow food for family use. This assures the family of better nutrition and a sense of security for the home. At the same time, it reduces the cost for store-bought food.



Rural Areas Development, one of the most interesting and challenging activities with which Extension is presently associated, is an effort to assist people in finding solutions to the economic and social problems of rural areas. The principles and procedures that are common to most successful Extension programs are especially applicable to Rural Areas Development. The involvement of local people in analyzing their situation in relation to the present and future trends and in identifying their major problems; in assessing their resources, both human and material; in setting goals; in considering various alternative ways to achieve those goals; finally, deciding upon a course of action and then carrying it out, is the process you are all familiar with when applied to an individual farm and home. Homemakers and home economics Extension workers have much to contribute to Rural Areas Development and I believe we should be more imaginative in finding our place in the program.

I know many of you are involved with RAD action programs in your counties. Miss Ethel Bennett, Related Arts Specialist in Arkansas, sent us a wonderful report of what they are doing to develop high quality craft articles for sale in their tourist areas. This is not just a "busy work" program but a well-planned effort to encourage creativity and pride in workmanship. I noted that 58 Negro leaders attended the Recreation and Rural Arts Workshop at Pine Bluff last year.

As home demonstration agents, you have both a responsibility and a wonderful opportunity to help young people and their parents understand the importance of boys and girls getting as much education as possible. The future holds few job opportunities for unskilled workers. Those who drop out of school without making definite plans for some vocational training will be financially crippled in the future. In some Rural Areas Development communities new jobs are going to be available. It is planned that schools will be opened to train men and women for the work to be done. If this happens in one of your counties, I hope you will urge those who are either unemployed or underemployed to enroll. Those individuals and families that plan to move to industrial centers need to be prepared for the changes they will face. A Kentucky Experiment Station study followed farm boys to the city to learn how well they fared. One of the factors that handicapped many of them in getting and holding jobs was their personal appearance and lack of knowledge of how to apply for a job. Here is a natural for home demonstration agents. Why not have a project on personal grooming and plan for practice in applying for a job? Let the young folks play-act the role of employer. They can set up some criteria they would look for if they were hiring a boy or girl.

In Iowa a very successful project on boys' clothing is helping farm boys learn how to select and wear clothing for different occasions--work, school, or church. They are also learning something about manners and grooming that will help them compete for jobs in the city.

Money management skills can be learned and are especially important to youths when they get their first job. Here, too, you have the knowledge

and ability to help not only the boys and girls, but their parents to clarify their values and establish some longtime plans.

As educators we have a continuing responsibility to help people recognize and learn to cope with new and increasingly difficult problems. This is a responsibility shared by all Extension workers, agents, specialists, and administrators. It is both a program planning and a teaching function. What people expect of the Extension Service is determined in large measure by what they think we are capable of delivering. Do they see the Extension Service as a kind of "answering service" that is primarily designed to help them solve their day-by-day problems in the home? Or do they see us as authentic interpreters of social, economic, and technological trends that affect them now and will continue to do so in the future? Is our subject matter based on research, and do our programs help homemakers develop sound criteria on which to base future judgments?

I believe homemakers of the future will expect us to be more imaginative in educational methodology. We may have fewer meetings but with more red meat in them.

We have been interested in the response of women to a series of radio and television programs on home management and family economics. Mothers of preschool children have been especially appreciative of such programs designed to meet their needs.

A recent survey of home economics news articles appearing in southern newspapers indicates that there is room for improvement. Although there were some excellent examples, too many of them read like personal notes of any woman's club meeting. Few contained subject-matter information. Dr. Joseph Bradford tells me he made a study of the mass media channels open to you and found that more space would probably be available if you would ask for it. Of course you would need to supply worthwhile material to hold space on radio, TV, or in newspapers. I understand only a few of you have regular newspaper columns that carry home economics information to the public.

Short courses for young homemakers are also proving very popular in a number of States.

The trend toward a series of meetings on one subject designed for a special audience is growing rapidly: family financial forums, nutrition for the aging or for teenagers; and preparing for retirement, are only a few.

One new direction that holds much promise is the leadership of Extension agents in sponsoring workshops and refresher courses for other professional workers. Those held in the past few years have been on human nutrition and on household equipment. Research is continually adding to our store of knowledge about foods. By sharing information about

new research findings with home economics teachers, welfare workers, and others who are concerned with improving family living, we can serve a much wider audience.

Home demonstration clubs will, I believe, continue to be an efficient method of teaching subject matter that is of equal concern to all homemakers. Such groups are also our best laboratories for developing leadership. Through those leaders who are influential in program planning, we have an opportunity to expand their vision of Extension programs of the future. Club women need to understand that the home demonstration agent has a responsibility to families who cannot or do not belong to clubs.

To do a good job, our own vision must be constantly expanding. This means not only graduate study, but also continual professional improvement through inservice training and self-study for all Extension workers.

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY  
JAN 25 1963  
C & R-PREP.